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ABSTRACT

A summer 1992 program in which Doshisha Women's Junior College (Japan) students studied at Mary Baldwin College (Virginia) for three weeks is discussed. Program aspects described include program development, student motivation for joining, student preparation for the study-abroad experience, effects of the experience on their English language proficiency and image of the Unites States, and student feelings about the program. Student preparation included 12 orientation sessions. The stay in the United States included English language and American culture classes, field trips, and a 4-day homestay. Student attitudes, as measured in surveys during the first week of the program and after returning, suggest that students found learning about English language functions in context most useful, felt their English proficiency had improved significantly, felt Americans were kinder and more friendly than anticipated, and that the United States was less dangerous than feared. Suggestions are made for future research. The two student questionnaires are appended. (MSE)

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論　　文

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論文

Preparation for and Results of a Short-Term Overseas Study Program in the United States

S. Kathleen Kitao

Abstract

In the summer of 1992, Doshisha Women's Junior College students went to Mary Baldwin College for a short-term overseas program for the first time. In this paper, I looked briefly at other studies of students going overseas. I discussed the Mary Baldwin College program for the junior college students in 1992. I described the students' preparation, the reasons they wanted to join the program, the effects of the program on students' language proficiency and image of the United States, and the students' comments about their experiences. Finally, I discussed suggestions for future programs from the students.

The orientation class met twelve times between early May and late July, including an overnight session at a hotel. In this paper, the types of preparation were described.

The students were at Mary Baldwin College three weeks, during which time they have American culture classes and English language classes. Students found the classes interesting and enjoyable. In addition to classes, there were a number of field trips. Students had a four-day homestay experience with local families.

As part of the course requirements, students filled out two surveys, one during the first week of the classes and one after returning from the United States. The questionnaire explored how students perceived the improvement of their English proficiency, how their images of the United States changed, and what types of preparation they perceived as being useful. The results indicated that students found learning about functions in English most useful. Learning about the situations they would be in as travelers was also considered beneficial.

Students were also asked to rate their English proficiency, and the comparison of the ratings before and after the program indicated that they perceived that their proficiency had significantly improved. Interviews with the five counselors who worked with the students supported this.

Students indicated that, as a result of their experiences in the United States, they felt Americans were kinder and more friendly. They also thought it was less dangerous, or only dangerous in certain places.

The paper concludes with suggestions for future research, and the questionnaires are included in the appendix.

Doshisha Women's College has been sending students overseas for a summer program since 1982. At that time, students of the four-year college went to Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, and traveled in the United States. After the junior college was established in 1986, a summer program was established for junior college students with Warwick University in Britain. In 1992, junior college students went to both Mary Baldwin College and Warwick University for the first time.

In this paper, I will look briefly at

other studies of students going overseas. I will discuss the Mary Baldwin College program for the junior college students in 1992. I will describe the students' preparation, the reasons they wanted to join the program, the effects of the program on students' language proficiency and image of the United States, and the students' comments about their experiences. Finally, I will discuss suggestions for future programs from the students.

Overseas Study

Although many Japanese students go overseas for study, either short term or long term, there has been relatively little study of these students, their preparation, or the results of the students' experience overseas (Yashima and Viswat, 1991).

It is difficult to compare the studies that have been done of Japanese students going overseas, because of the widely different populations and situations that they involve. Studies that have been done include Yashima and Viswat (1991), which looked at changes in the image of the United States for Japanese high school students who spent a year studying in the United States; and Higuchi, Saito, Lamarche, Shelangouski, and Kikuchi (1982) looked at junior college students who were in Canada for a homestay experience. In both cases, the image that the students had of the host country deteriorated, and after their experience, they considered the people of the host country less friendly, less warm, less polite, less reliable, less kind, etc. However, in spite of being somewhat less positive, the participants' image of the host countries were still relatively positive, and the researchers concluded that the students' images had become somewhat more realistic through their experiences.

A study of a short-term program by Nozaki (1987) indicated that students' image of Americans became significantly more positive after a short stay in the United States on 14 out of 28 items: honesty, generosity, intellectual curiosity, sense of responsibility, warmheartedness, impartiality, diligence, kindness, prudence, politeness, cleanliness, morality, trustworthiness, and peaceableness. Students' images did not become significantly more negative on any item. Nozaki also looked at changes in the students' images of Japan, but found no significant differences.

The Overseas Orientation Course

In sending students overseas, no matter what their country of origin and host country, orientation is extremely valuable. Studying overseas is "potentially one of the most broadening and maturing educational experiences that a young person can have." However, "merely sending young people to live abroad for a while does not guarantee that they will learn a great deal more than if they remained at home" (Grove, 1989, p. xi). While Grove was referring to long-term programs, orientation is also important to the success of short-term programs.

Choosing Participants

Students were chosen in late April 1992 for the Mary Baldwin College program from a pool of 115 applicants from Doshisha Women's Junior College for the MBC program and the program at War-

wick University. Students were chosen based on written questions in English and Japanese about themselves and their goals for going overseas, a multiple-choice quiz about American history and culture, and an interview. In the interview, which was conducted in both English and Japanese, students were rated according to their English proficiency, their goals for the program, and by how responsible they seemed to be.

Thirty-four students were chosen by this process. All of the students were first year students in the junior college, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty years old. Six were Japanese majors and the remainder were English majors. One student had lived in Malaysia for three years, one had been in the United States for a 25-day homestay, and three had been overseas on vacation for less than one week. One student dropped out of the program in June and was not replaced, so thirty-three students participated in the program and made the trip.

The Overseas Orientation Course

The orientation class met twelve times between early May and late July, including an overnight session at a hotel. It was taught by one full-time faculty member, with the assistance of a staff member. The importance of attendance was stressed, and there were only two absences during the course.

Several types of preparation were combined in the orientation. There were two textbooks, *Communicating with Americans: Functions in English* (Kitao and Kitao, 1991) and *Background to the USA* (Musman, 1982). In addition, two unpublished manuscripts, *Travel English* (Kitao and Kitao, 1992a) and *Travel Expressions* (Kitao and Kitao, 1992b), were used. I will discuss each of these textbooks individually and how they were used.

Communicating with Americans. This book takes a functional approach to the teaching of English. There are chapters on such functions as greeting, complimenting, agreeing and disagreeing, requesting, complaining, and expressing appreciation. It has model dialogues, explanations of cultural differences between Japanese and English, and many examples of expressions for performing functions and responding to them.

Students were assigned to answer the true/false and short answer questions from two or three chapters per week as homework. In class, students did role plays using the functions that were covered that week. For the first six weeks, students did their role plays with other students; for the rest of the course, they did their role plays with the teacher.

Background to the USA. This is a general book on American culture. Students were assigned to read and answer short answer questions about two chapters a week. Chapters were chosen that seemed more relevant to their experience in the United States, particularly to the cities that they would be visiting and the periods of American history that would be relevant to the places they would be visiting.

Travel English and *Travel Expressions.* These two manuscripts were organized around situations that travelers in the United States face. These situations include being on an airplane, in a post

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office, or at a hotel. In *Travel English*, each of these situations is explained along with the behaviors expected in them. There were true/false questions at the end of each chapter. Students were assigned to read and answer the questions on two to three chapters each week.

Travel Expressions addresses the same situations as *Travel English*, providing expressions and sample dialogues related to those situations. Students were assigned to read through the expressions and dialogues, though they were not used directly in class until role plays were done at the end of the class.

Student Group Presentations. Groups of students did presentations on various useful topics— packing and traveling, health and safety, talking about Japanese culture in English, American education, homestay, and so on— and on each of the places they would be visiting— Virginia, New York, Boston, Niagara Falls, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

Other. In addition, students saw videos in class about two of the places they would be visiting during their time in the US. They were also given handouts with information about various practical aspects of the trip, for example, how to act during their homestay. There was also an opportunity to see a video from last year's program at MBC and to ask questions of last year's participants.

Journals. Students were required to keep journals during the orientation and to continue to keep them during the trip. They were asked to write about how they were preparing for the trip, what their impressions of the United States were before they left and after they had been there, and what they did in the United States. Though they were assigned to write one page per week during the orientation and two pages per week during the trip, most students wrote much more. Direct quotations in this paper are from students' journal entries.

Students' Compliance. A large amount of homework was assigned, but compliance was very high. In spite of this large amount of homework, few of the students ever failed to turn in their homework assignments.

Students' Preparation Outside of Class

According to their responses to the questionnaire described below, most students did additional preparation for their overseas trip. The types of preparation they listed included: 1) reading books or magazine articles (about the United States, homestay, and so on), 2) listening to radio or television English conversation programs, 3) watching foreign television programs or movies, 4) listening to English tapes, 5)attending conversation classes, and 6) watching television news in English. Only one student responded that she did not do any preparation outside of the orientation class.

The Mary Baldwin College Program

Classes

The students are at Mary Baldwin College three weeks, during which time they take American culture classes (in 1992, American children's culture, religions in America and American history) and English language classes (reading, writing and speaking/listening). The culture clas-

ses emphasized student participation and discussion rather than lecture. Among other assignments, students did a short independent study project for the culture classes, made journal entries in class for the composition class, and interviewed local businesspeople and college employees for the listening/speaking class, and wrote a report on the experience for their composition class. Fables, myths, and poems written by students for the composition class were gathered in a book that the students were given at the end of the course.

Students found the classes interesting and enjoyable. One student wrote, "We have our first class yesterday. I felt that an hour was very short, because every class was interesting for me." Another student wrote, "In Japan, most classes which I have in college are passive classes except for English classes. I only write down what a teacher writes on blackboard, but in America, I can speak in class, so I can feel that I an taking part in class."

Living Situation

During the time they were at MBC, students lived in a dormitory. They were divided into four groups, and there was a counselor, an American college student or recent graduate, assigned to each group. Students ate meals with their counselors and spent time with them outside of class. Though there were other Japanese students on campus at the same time, the Doshisha students had little contact with them.

Field Trips

In addition to classes, there were a number of field trips. Students visited a local organ factory, Richmond (including an art museum and a history museum), Williamsburg, Jamestown, Woodrow Wilson's Birthplace, a local dairy farm and poultry farm, Monticello, and the Museum of American Frontier Culture (where they could see farms from the 18th century United States and three European countries), and attended Jazz in the Park and the Oak Grove Music Festival.

Homestay

After three weeks at MBC, students had a homestay experience with local families. Students were assigned to homestay families in pairs. They first met their families at a dinner and then spent four and a half days with them. With the homestay families, students engaged in a wide variety of activities, including camping, hiking, swimming, horseback riding, visiting museums, attending church services and other church activities, and visiting the host families' relatives or neighbors.

Entries in the students' journals indicated that the homestay experience was a universally positive one, and that all of the students formed good relationships with their host families and felt that, as a result of the experience, they learned a great deal about American daily life, particularly family life. One student wrote of the experience, "Though I stayed with them for only five days, it was the most wonderful time for me. They were very sweet and treated us as treasures. I could touch American daily life directly. I discovered many things." Another wrote, "They were all very kind and treated us

as members of their family. I was very glad to stay with them a week. I won't forget them."

Japan Night

Students presented a "Japan Night" for their host families and the staff of the program. At Japan Night, students demonstrated aspects of Japanese culture, including teaching *origami*, doing a *kamishibai*, and letting the audience sample Japanese food. The audience reaction was positive, and the students' journal entries indicated that they felt that Japan Night had been very successful.

Overseas Orientation Surveys

The Questionnaires

As part of the course requirements, students filled out two surveys, one during the first week of the classes and one after returning from the United States. (The questions discussed in this paper appear in the appendix.) The main purposes of these questionnaires were exploring:

1. how students perceived the improvement of their English proficiency during the program
2. how students' images of the United States changed during the program
3. what types of preparation students perceived as being useful

In addition, information was gathered about how students prepared for going to the United States, why they applied for the program, what advice they had for preparation of future students in this program, and what cities they enjoyed visiting most.

Results of the Questionnaire

Reasons for Joining the Program. When asked for their reasons for wanting to enter the MBC program, students' answers included a desire to: 1) speak to foreigners, 2) learn English (abroad) or improve English proficiency, 3) participate in a homestay program, 4) communicate/exchange views with Americans, 5) experience American education, 6) prepare for future study at an American university, 7) teach Americans about Japan, 8) learn about American culture and life, 9) see how Americans live, 10) expand their world, and 11) learn American pronunciation. The most frequently mentioned reason was desire to participate in the homestay program.

Students Perceptions of their Preparation. Students were asked on the questionnaire which types of preparation they had found most and least useful (see Appendix). The students' responses indicated that learning about functions (*Communicating with Americans*) was the most useful to students. Seventeen students responded that it was the most useful type of preparation. Learning about traveling and using English (*Travel English*) was listed by ten students. Presentations by other students (5 students) and learning about American culture (*Background to the USA*) (2 students) were also mentioned. As for the least useful preparation, *Background to the USA* was perceived as being the least useful. It was mentioned by the largest number of students (15). Presentations were mentioned by eight students. *Travel Expressions* (4 students) and *Communicating with Americans* (1 student) were also mentioned. Five students specified that they did not consider any of the

types of preparation "least useful."

Many of the students clearly felt that learning about functions in English was useful to them during their time in the United States. Learning about the situations they would be in as travelers was also considered beneficial. Probably these were considered useful because they were very specific and concrete, so students could clearly see their usefulness.

Learning specific expressions for travel situations (*Travel English*) was not considered the most useful preparation by any student and five students considered it the least useful preparation. However, because little emphasis was placed on this (there was no specific homework, other than to read the expressions, and they were only used in role plays at the end of the course), students may not have spent sufficient time on this type of preparation to benefit from it.

Learning about American culture, at least from *Background to the USA*, was not perceived as being particularly helpful. However, it is well known that a knowledge of culture is necessary to effective communication (Kitao, 1977), and that background knowledge influences comprehension (Anderson, 1978; Kitao, 1989). For example, one student mentioned that she wished she had known more about American government, since her host mother talked about it, and a few other students mentioned that it would have been helpful to know more about various aspects of American culture, including daily life. It may be that because the students can see a direct use for functions or explanations of situations they will be in as travelers, they can easily recognize the usefulness of such information. However, many of the students may not have been as aware of the usefulness of background knowledge in communicating with English speakers. Since this type of preparation is not as concrete or obviously useful as learning about functions or situations, students may not have been aware of its usefulness.

Increase in Students' English Proficiency. In the questionnaire, students were asked to rate their English proficiency on a scale of zero to ten when they began the program in May and again after they returned from the United States. Before the program, the mean rating of their proficiency was 3.56, with a standard deviation of 1.16. After the program, the mean was 5.74, with a standard deviation of 0.93. I did a one-tailed t test comparing the two values, which indicated that the increase was significant ($t = -10.73$; $p < .05$).

Clearly, the students perceived that their English had improved noticeably. It is unlikely, however, that in three weeks of classes and two weeks of travel and homestay they learned a great deal more about English grammar or vocabulary. It is more likely that what actually improved was their ability to make use of the knowledge of English that they already have.

In addition to asking the students to rate their proficiency, I interviewed the five counselors about their qualitative perceptions of the increase in the students' English proficiency. This interview was conducted ten days after the students arrived at MBC. The counselors were all able to see clear improvements in the

students' English proficiency. Specifically, they said that the had gone from speaking in one- to two-word utterances to full sentences. Students' comprehension also improved, according to the counselors, in that the students were capable of understanding English spoken at a nearly natural speed, compared to the time when the students arrived, when the counselors felt it necessary to slow their rate of speaking considerably. The counselors felt that the relaxed atmosphere of the program was conducive to building confidence.

In addition to gaining confidence in their English, many of the students seemed to have gained more motivation to further improve their English. Many of them commented in their journals that when they returned to Japan, they wanted to work on their English proficiency so that they will be able to communicate better when they return to the United States.

Students' Advice for Future Programs. The students were also asked about their advice for the directors of future programs and what they wished they had known before going to the United States. No single suggestion was made by more than four students, and most suggestions were made by only one student.

Suggestions for the preparation before going to the United States included: learning more about American culture, including lifestyle, customs, and history (particularly related to places students visited, perhaps in Japanese); learning more about MBC (for example, how many students are there, what majors are offered, etc.); more opportunity to speak to foreigners before going to the United States; more study of English language, particularly conversation, vocabulary, and pronunciation; and more emphasis on explaining Japanese culture in English.

Suggestions for the portion of the program at MBC included more free time for rest, class preparation, or writing in journals; more time for preparation for Japan Night; a longer time spent in classes, perhaps after homestay; more counselors, perhaps one counselor per three to four students, because students speak English most with counselors; and more opportunity to talk with teachers and other Americans.

Students were also asked about their favorite and least favorite city. Of the cities the students visited after leaving MBC, New York and Los Angeles were the most popular, though all of the cities were mentioned as a favorite by at least one student. Most of the students said that there was no city that they did not enjoy visiting. A few students, however, mentioned that the schedule was difficult.

Changes in Students' Image of the United States

In order to assess changes in the students' images of the United States and Americans during the orientation and their time abroad, students were asked to list five positive and five negative adjectives describing the United States on the pretest and posttest. This method had both advantages and disadvantages in comparison to the method used by Yashima and Viswat (1991), Nozaki (1987), and others, in which participants rated their host country on a semantic differential, using adjective pairs such as friendly/unfriendly, kind/unkind, and dependent/

independent. While this method provides clear and easily quantifiable results, the results are in terms of what the researcher, not the participant, considers most important. Asking students to provide their own adjectives makes the results more difficult to analyze, but it does provide more access to what is uppermost in the minds of the participants themselves.

Students responded with up to one to five adjectives (or frequently nouns or phrases) for the positive and negative lists. One student on the posttest did not provide any negative response.

Positive images. The most common adjective used to describe Americans or the United States was "friendly," and this was an image that became stronger during the period of the study. Seventeen of the students described Americans as "friendly" in the posttest, up from seven on the pretest. Related adjectives were "kind", which appeared on 14 posttests but only three pretests; large- or big-hearted (three each on the pretest and posttest); generous (twice in the posttest and once in the pretest); and gentle (once on the posttest). Three students on the posttest, but none on the pretest, noticed politeness to women. Americans were also described as being active (five on the pretest and five on the posttest) and cheerful (eight on the pretest and eight on the posttest) and who express their opinions openly (3 students in the posttest and one in the pretest). Some students perceived Americans' lifestyle as being leisurely (three students in the posttest), though this was sometimes perceived as being negative in that clerks were slow (four students on the posttest).

As for the country itself, the image of the United States as being large seems to be the strongest image, both on the pretest (19 students) and posttest (26 students). It was also described as beautiful (4 students in the posttest) and with a lot of greenery and natural scenery, even in cities (4 students on the posttest).

Negative images. In the pretest, students' negative images of the United States were largely related to large social problems. These were listed less often in the posttest. For example, the social problems that were listed included racial discrimination (13 in the pretest and 1 in the posttest), crime and violence (8 in the pretest and 4 in the posttest), and AIDS (3 in the pretest and 1 in the posttest).

The reduction in the number of students who listed racial discrimination as a factor in their negative image of the United States was particularly noticeable. Though students had apparently heard about discrimination through the media before going to the United States, and some expressed concern about "Japan bashing," they experienced little or none of it themselves, so this image changed.

Students saw the United States as dangerous both before and after the program (13 in the pretest and 15 in the posttest). Interestingly, however, the adjective "dangerous" was never qualified in the pretest, but in the posttest, it was usually qualified by such phrases as, "in some places," "mainly New York," and "large cities." Students appear to have learned that different places in the United States vary in how dangerous they are. In her journal, one student

wrote, "I came to like America after this program. I changed my thought about America. Before I visited America I thought that America was only dangerous, but it is not true. Some places are dangerous, but there are a lot of nice places. And people were very kind and friendly."

How Students Felt Their Images Had Changed. The students were also asked directly how their image of the United States had changed as a result of the time they spent there. The replies of all the students indicated that their images were more positive than or the same as they were before the trip. None of the students indicated that their image was more negative. Thirteen of the students indicated that the United States was safer or less dangerous then they had expected. Four of the students indicated that they felt "closer" to the United States or Americans than they had before the trip.

Most of the students, either in this questionnaire or in conversation with me, their teachers or their counselors, expressed interest in returning to the United States, possibly even to live or study. Three of the students indicated that they had not been particularly interested in the United States before this trip, but now they were very interested in it. (One of them wrote, "At first I wanted to go to England, but I think I'm lucky girl, I couldn't go to England. My favorite country is America." Clearly, the image of the students was more positive than it had been before the trip.

Conclusion

The students obviously felt that they had benefited from their experience of studying overseas. They felt that they had been broadened by the experience. As one student wrote (after having commented that she had gained weight in the United States), "I may be overweight, but I not only my body grew but also my heart. I never forget my American life." Another wrote, "I could know American idea, American history and American culture, and we could tell Japanese history and culture in return. I could feel close to America. I love America and I want to visit America again." Another student felt that the experience had had an especially profound effect on her. She wrote after the time at Mary Baldwin College, "In this three weeks I found my mind changed. I found there was nothing I can't do. I want to challenge everything without fearing. I'm sure if I hold out, my dream will come true." Another student wrote, "Through this trip, I feel I grew up... I learned many things. Probably I come to be able to speak English better than before I went to America... I'll never forget this trip." They perceived that their English had improved, they had more motivation to study English, their image of the United States and of Americans was more positive, and they had more confidence in themselves.

Future studies of these topics would be worthwhile. For example, more in-depth studies of what students found useful and, perhaps more important, why they found it useful, would help in the future preparation of students for overseas study. (Studying what students found useful might be more effectively done with a Likert scale or a semantic dif-

ferential.) In addition, studies on the lasting effects of the experience and how much changes in students' attitudes toward and images of the host country persist would be valuable.

Appendix

Overseas Orientation Survey
(May 1992)

Answer the following questions. If you have difficulty answering in English, please answer in Japanese.

Name : _____

Age : _____ Years _____ Months

1. Have you ever been to the United States? If so, how long were you there? What did you do while you were there?
2. Have you ever been to any other foreign country? If so, how long were you there? What did you do while you were there?
4. Rate your English proficiency on a scale of 0–10. (10 means as proficient as a native English speaker ; 0 means no ability at all.) Circle the number.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. What is your image of the United States, both negative and positive? Write five positive (good) adjectives and five negative (bad) adjectives. Briefly explain with what you mean by each.

Positive :

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Negative :

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Overseas Orientation Survey
(October 1992)

Answer the following questions. If you have difficulty answering in English, please answer in Japanese.

Name : _____

1. In addition to attending the overseas orientation class, how did you prepare for the trip to the United States? (for example, radio or TV English conversation programs ; conversation classes; reading books)?
2. Rate your English proficiency after the trip on a scale of 0–10. (10 means as proficient as a native English speaker ; 0 means no ability at all.) Circle the number.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. What is your image of the United States, both negative and positive? Write five positive (good) adjectives and five negative (bad) adjectives. Briefly explain with what you mean by each.

Positive :

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Negative :

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

4. How did your image of the United States change as a result of your time there?
5. What was your image of American

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families before your homestay? How did your image of American families change as a result of your homestay?

6. In this class you prepared for the to the United States in various ways
   1) learning about functions (requests, greetings, etc.) —— *Communicating with Americans*
   2) learning about American culture —— *Background to the USA*
   3) learning about traveling and using English —— *Travel English* (handouts)
   4) presentations about traveling, American culture and the places that we will visit
   5) learning about English expressions —— *Travel Expressions*
   6) Other (please specify)

Which did you find most useful (write in the number)?

Which did you find least useful (write in the number)?

7. What advice would you give to next year's director for the MBC program? What kinds of preparation did you find especially useful? What kinds did not help? What did you wish you had known?
8. Which city did you enjoy visiting most? Which city did you not enjoy visiting?

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